

WATER AND WILDLIFE SUPPORT

Last session, we committed to a Wildlife Permanent Account because of the importance of wildlife and hunting to our economy and our lifestyle. Recognizing Wyoming as a high plains arid state with a need for a sustained and funded effort to develop water supply projects, we adopted Water Development Account III and re-focused a part of the effort at the Wyoming Water Development Commission.

At the time of passage, everyone understood these were initial steps on a journey that would extend for decades. In post-session discussions with citizens and the press, nearly everyone listed these permanent accounts as positive accomplishments.

I included modest additional funding for these programs in my budget recommendations. The budget bill, as it stands, adds nothing to the permanent fund for either of these programs for the next two years. I implore you to reconsider these decisions. Wyoming remains an arid, high plains region where water, wildlife and hunting are incredibly important to our economy, our lifestyle and our future. If we are not going to fund these efforts, let us be honest with our citizens and repeal them.